REMARKS

Favorable reconsideration of this application, as presently amended, is respectfully requested.

The Abstract has been amended in view of the informalities noted on page 2, paragraph 1 of the Office Action.

The title of the invention has been amended to be more descriptive as required on page 2, paragraph 2 of the Office Action.

Claims 1-5 and 7-11 are pending in the present application. Claim 6 has been cancelled and claims 9-11 have been added by the present amendment. Claims 6-8 were rejected under 35 USC 112, second paragraph, as being indefinite. Claims 1-5 were rejected under 35 USC 103(a) as being unpatentable over Shimamura et al. '131 in view of Matsumoto '128, Young, Jr. et al. '201 or Bowen et al. '943.

With reference to the rejection of claims 6-8 under 35 USC 112, second paragraph, the claims have been amended with an eye toward correcting the informalities noted on page 2, paragraph 3 of the Office Action. More specifically, the subject matter of claim 6 has been included in new independent claim 9 which is directed to a method for preparing a roll of film for development and developing the film. New claim 9 is based on original claim 1 and in addition to requiring steps such as inspecting the film for defects during an unwinding step, further requires the steps of conveying the film to a development station adapted to develop exposed images on the film; and controlling a temperature at the development station through a heating system.

Accordingly, claim 9 and claims 7-8 which have amended to depend from claim 9 are in compliance with the requirements of 35 USC 112, second paragraph.

Referring to the rejection of claims 1-5 under 35 USC 103(a) as being unpatentable over Shimamura et al. '131 in view of Matsumoto '128, Young, Jr., et al. '201 or Bowen et al. '943, the applied references, whether considered individually or in combination, are not believed to anticipate or make or obvious the specific features set forth by the claimed invention.

Claim 1 relates to a method for preparing a roll of film for development which comprises receiving a film magazine having a roll of film at a film unload station of a film processing system; extracting a tongue of the roll of film from the magazine; unwinding the roll of film from the magazine; cutting the trailing end of the film from the magazine; transporting a leading end of the film to a leader splicing apparatus of the film processing system; and splicing a leader to the leading end of the film. Claim 1 also requires that during the unwinding

step, the method further comprises inspecting the film for defects and imperfections.

The reference to Shimamura et al. '131 discloses a film processing apparatus in which a film cartridge having a film therein is placed on a conveyor and transported to several stations prior to the film being developed. In the reference to Shimamura et al. '131, the cartridge remains attached to the film throughout the operation of attaching a leader sheet to the film. This is illustrated in, for example, Fig. 1 in which the cartridge is conveyed by a conveyor belt to a station where the leader is attached. Thereafter, the film is detached from the cartridge when the photographic film is to be inserted into the developer station.

The method and system as disclosed in Shimamura et al. '131 are different than the method as required by claim 1. More specifically, in the method of claim 1, after the step of unwinding the roll of film from the magazine, the trailing end of the film is cut from the magazine. Thereafter, the film is transported to a leader splicing apparatus where a leader is spliced to a leading end of the film. In Shimamura et al. '131, the cartridge attached to the film are moved to a station where a leader is attached to the film.

The references to Matsumoto '128, Young, Jr. et al. '201 and Bowen et al. '943 do not correct the deficiencies of Shimamura et al. '131 with respect to the claimed invention. More specifically, the above-noted secondary references were cited to show the concept of inspecting film to prevent jamming, however, the secondary references are not believed to show or suggest the specific combination of the unwinding, cutting and splicing steps as required by claim 1. Additionally, absent Applicants' disclosure, one having ordinary skill in the art would not have combined the above-noted references to achieve the claimed invention, since none of the references are believed to show or suggest the specific combination of the unwinding, cutting and splicing features as required by claim 1.

Accordingly, Shimamura et al. '131, Matsumoto '128, Young, Jr. et al. '201 and Bowen et al. '943, whether considered individually or in combination, are not believed to anticipate or make obvious the specific features required by claim 1.

Claims 2-5 depend from claim 1 and set forth further unique features of the present invention which are also not believed to be shown or suggested in the applied references. For example, claim 3 requires that during the unwinding step, the method comprises inspecting the film for proper length, and rewinding the film back into the magazine if a defect, imperfection or improper film length is detected during the inspecting step. The applied references are not

believed to show or suggest the concept of inspecting the film for proper length during an unwinding step as required by claim 3 which depends from claim 1.

Accordingly, claims 2-5 are also believed to be allowable.

The present response includes additional independent claim 9 which relates to the concept of preparing a roll of film for development and developing the film. Claim 9 includes features of claim 1 and also requires the steps of conveying the film to a development station adapted to develop exposed images on the film, and controlling the temperature at the development station through a heating system. As noted above, the applied references are not believed to show or suggest the specific features of the unwinding, cutting and splicing steps as required by claim 9. Further, the applied references are not believed to show or suggest the above in combination with the concept of conveying the film to a development station and controlling a temperature of the development station through a heating system.

Accordingly, claim 9 is believed to be allowable over the applied references.

The present response also includes a further independent claim 10 based on original claim 1. Claim 10 includes the features of claim 1 and further requires inspecting the film for defects and proper length during the unwinding step. As noted above, none of the references show or suggest the specific concept of unwinding a roll of film from a magazine, cutting a trailing end of the film from the magazine, splicing the film to a leader, and inspecting the film for defects and proper length during the unwinding step.

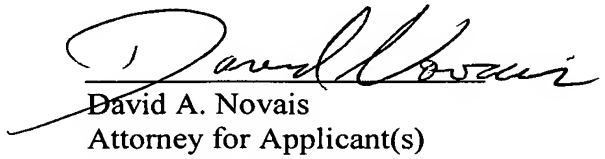
Accordingly, claim 10 is believed to be allowable over the applied references.

Claim 11 depends from claim 10 and sets forth a further unique feature with respect to rewinding the film back into the film magazine when a defect, imperfection or improper film length is detected.

Accordingly, claims 10 and 11 are believed to be allowable over the applied references.

In view of the foregoing comments, it is submitted that the inventions defined by each of claims 1-5 and 7-11 are patentable, and a favorable reconsideration of this application is therefore requested.

Respectfully submitted,



David A. Novais
Attorney for Applicant(s)
Registration No. 33,324

DAN/ld
Rochester, NY 14650
Telephone: 585-588-2727
Facsimile: 585-477-1148